

THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON

REVELATION 17

Pastor Dennis Clanton

Woodland Church

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Babylon is a religious spirit of rebellion and resistance to God and His Word.

“Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people were placed on the earth. The great city of Babylon split into three sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So God remembered all of Babylon’s sins, and he made her drink the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. And every island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. There was a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-five pounds fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.”
(Revelation 16:18–21, NLT)

“One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came over and spoke to me. “Come with me,” he said, “and I will show you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who rules over many waters. The kings of the world have committed adultery with her, and the people who belong to this world have been made drunk by the wine of her immorality.” So the angel took me in the Spirit into the wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and blasphemies against God were written all over it.” (Revelation 17:1–3, NLT)

1. Babylon is found wherever there is satanic deception.

“She saw that I divorced faithless Israel because of her adultery. But that treacherous sister Judah had no fear, and now she, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution. Israel treated it all so lightly—she thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made of wood and stone. So now the land has been polluted.” (Jeremiah 3:8–9, NLT)

“What a sick heart you have, says the Sovereign LORD, to do such things as these, acting like a shameless prostitute.” (Ezekiel 16:30, NLT)

See also (Jerusalem) Ezekiel 16, 23, and (Babylon) Jeremiah 51.

2. Babylon in Revelation represents the complete culture of the world apart from God.
3. The father of Babylon is Satan.
4. The scarlet symbolizes the beast's blasphemies contrasted with the white horse rider, and those dressed in white, who are faithful and true.

“She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.” For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.”
(Revelation 19:8, NLT)

“Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war.” (Revelation 19:11, NLT)

“The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses.” (Revelation 19:14, NLT)

The great prostitute is dressed in purple and scarlet; her focus is upon materialism.

“The woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry made of gold and precious gems and pearls.” (Revelation 17:4a, NLT)

She held a golden goblet in her hand full of her immoralities.

“In her hand she held a gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality.” (Revelation 17:4b, NLT)

The great prostitute is the mother of all prostitutes.

“A mysterious name was written on her forehead: “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.”
(Revelation 17:5, NLT)

Wherever there is pride, self-trust, boastfulness, power and violence especially against God's people. These are the characteristics of Babylon's appearance.

Her business is all commercial, what can I get out of it.

She takes what God gave us for good and to glorify Him with and wastes it to do evil.

“But you thought your fame and beauty were your own. So you gave yourself as a prostitute to every man who came along. Your beauty was theirs for the asking.” (Ezekiel 16:15, NLT)

She murders Christians and is drunk on their blood.

“I could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God's holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.”
(Revelation 17:6, NLT)

“Why are you so amazed?” the angel asked. “I will tell you the mystery of this woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns on which she sits. The beast you saw was once alive but isn't now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit and go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world, whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made, will be amazed at the reappearance of this beast who had died. “This calls for a mind with understanding: The seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills where the woman rules. They also represent seven kings. Five kings have already fallen, the sixth now reigns, and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be brief.” (Revelation 17:7–10, NLT)

John is describing a reality behind the earth's rulers rather than successive political manifestations in history.

The meaning of the beast. It is a paraphrase of the image in Revelation 13 of the wounded beast who was healed.

“I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond recovery—but the fatal wound was healed! The whole world marveled at this miracle and gave allegiance to the beast.” (Revelation 13:3, NLT)

“And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world. He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life.” (Revelation 13:14, NLT)

He was defeated by Christ at Calvary.

“I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please.”
(Luke 4:6, NLT)

“Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.” (Hebrews 2:14–15, NLT)

“The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” (John 12:31–32, NLT)

He is given a little time to oppose God and His people before his final sentencing to destruction after his mortal wound to cause the deceived of the earth to follow Him.

“Therefore, rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! But terror will come on the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you in great anger, knowing that he has little time.”
(Revelation 12:12, NLT)

“Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against God. And he was given authority to do whatever he wanted for forty-two months.”
(Revelation 13:5, NLT)

“The scarlet beast that was, but is no longer, is the eighth king. He is like the other seven, and he, too, is headed for destruction. The ten horns of the beast are ten kings who have not yet risen to power. They will be appointed to their kingdoms for one brief moment to reign with the beast. They will all agree to give him their power and authority. Together they will go to war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord of all lords and King of all kings. And his called and chosen and faithful ones will be with him.” Then the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language. The scarlet beast and his ten horns all hate the prostitute. They will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire. For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out his purposes. They will agree to give their authority to the scarlet beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled. And this woman you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the kings of the world.” (Revelation 17:11–18, NLT)

Remember the number 7 represents fullness. The beast symbolizes the fullness of blasphemy and evil.

Ten is a repeated number representing the multiplicity of rulers in confederacy.

They agree to go to battle against Jesus and his followers.

The harlot is totally destroyed by evil because evil will turn on itself.

God put it into their hearts to accomplish His purpose. God is in control.

Babylon is the complete opposite of God’s plan.

Babylon is the opposite of Christ’s bride, the church.

GROWTHWORK

- 1. Praise God for His mercy and share our faith with others.**

“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:46, NLT)

- 2. Babylon can be a beautiful and exciting place to live in. Don’t be deceived.**

3. **We must be careful to evaluate our lives prayerfully.**
4. **Pray for the persecuted church.**

